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Original Contributions

THE BLESSING OF SIMOON.

No. IV.

JESUS—A SIGN SPOKEN AGAINST.

Simon, not only foresaw that Jesus was to present conclusive evidence that He spoke not of Himself, but was a duly accredited ambassador from God to man—but he also foresaw the treatment which He was to receive from man. He may not have foresaw all the particulars of His life; he may not have foresaw how He was to be regarded by the majority of men in ages yet to come, but he foresaw that Jesus—the spotless Man—the great teacher—the friend of humanity—the worker of miracles—was to be slandered, insulted, and persecuted, and because of the conclusiveness of the evidences which He presented that His claims were valued and His doctrines true.

It is interesting to notice as we review the past how completely the predictions of Simoion that Jesus was to be "a sign spoken against" has been fulfilled.

No sooner had He begun His public ministry than He found opponents. At first the common people were inclined to receive Him as the Messiah, but the leaders of the people rejected and hated Him. They interrupted Him in His discourses, they slandered His person, and misrepresented His doctrines. They sought every occasion to discover something in His words or conduct which might render Him liable to punishment. The leaders of the people at length succeeded in infusing the hatred of Jesus into the hearts of the masses. Usually disliked, without an influential friend to speak or to act in His defence, He was at length arrested, tried, and though found guilty of no crime, condemned amidst the acclamations of the people, to an ignominious and cruel death.

Nor has the world since spoken of Him more favorably, or regarded Him with higher reverence and affection than His own countrymen during the days of His flesh. His claims as the Messiah have even been rejected by the majority; His teaching have never won their way into general favor; His person has never been held in esteem, or loved by the world. On the contrary, those who have despised alike His person and His teachings have ever been the multitude—a few only have implicitly received His teachings, acknowledged the validity of His claims, cordially submitted to His authority, and felt toward Him anything like the love and gratitude which He deserves.

But what is still more extraordinary is the fact that the proof which He gave of His Messiahship was the chief occasion of this relentless enmity. When on earth we find that the hatred of His enemies was roused to fury whenever He gave some unanswerable evidence that He came forth from God. So long as He was content merely with exhibiting His characteristic amiability and benevolence, or with unfolding moral precepts, the hatred of his enemies seemed to be dormant; but whenever He wrought miracles which proved that He was a teacher sent from God—whenever in His discourses He treated of the nature, character, and operations of the Deity, or whenever He presented conspicuously a spectacle of supernatural virtue, then the rage of His enemies was roused to frenzy, and they called Him a demoniac, a madman, a blasphemer, or shouted "crucify Him, crucify Him."

So in subsequent times—Jesus is "spoken against" whenever evidence of His Messiahship is brought home to the hearts and consciences of men. Their natural enmity is dormant, until they are convinced that Jesus is more than a man. But when their reason is baffled by the evidence which He affords of a superhuman nature and mission—then the enmity becomes apparent. If He could only be regarded as a teacher whose doctrines were doubtful at best, then those to whom they are distasteful could contrive to despise Him, and pity His votaries—but because He speaks with authority, and has been the truth of His doctrines—apathy or contempt gives way to dislike and hatred.

Now we notice a strange and melancholy fact. Those who have been well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, and who have had the character of Jesus repeatedly presented to their attention feel a greater distaste towards those doctrines, than those who have never received such a religious training. We notice also that feelings of positive dislike are excited as reason or conscience acknowledge the doctrines to be true, and the character of the Teacher spotless. This dislike is often seen to be excited to the highest pitch in those seasons in which the truth is presented in demonstration of the spirit and in power, deepening its influence over the hearts of believers and constraining the rebellious to penitence and submission.

Now we are prepared to understand how it is that Jesus is sent not only for the rise but also for the fall of many in Israel. Now we learn that the appearance of Jesus as a sign, decrees the salvation of the believer and a fearful ruin of the unbeliever. By the coming of Jesus a new sin became possible. Never before did men have an opportunity to reject a pardon freely offered to them—to insult Deity when visibly manifested to them—to shut their ears to truth when taught by One who had

come down from heaven to reveal it. But such sin, now became possible. By rejecting Jesus, pardon for sin was rejected, Divine mercy contemptuously disregarded, and the Deity Himself wantonly and deliberately insulted.

It is very evident also that such a sin as that of rejecting Jesus would be far greater than any other which man had yet committed—the guilt of all ordinary transgression is as nothing compared with the guilt involved in the rejection of Jesus. Injury inflicted on man is innocence compared with dishonor done to God. Ingratitude for daily and temporal blessings is a trivial crime compared with ingratitude in view of such an expression of love for sinners, as the Holy One has made in the gift of His Son. Inasmuch as the claims of the Creator transcend those of the creature, and inasmuch as His love revealed in His Son surpasses all other exhibitions of His goodness, to that extent the guilt of rejecting God manifest in the flesh exceeds that involved in any other transgression. He who should reject Jesus would also place himself more completely than ever before under the dominion of sin. It is a matter of experience that each transgression strengthens the power of sin. This power is strengthened in proportion with the enormity of the crime. When the transgression is committed in the face of a knowledge of duty, conscience will soon cease to warn—when it involves ingratitude, the heart will grow hard—when it is prompted by a particular propensity or passion, that will at once usurp absolute authority in the soul. What transgression can so speedily and effectually sear the conscience, petrify the heart, and influence the evil propensity within, as the deliberate rejection of pardon, sanctification, and eternal life when offered to us, and even pressed upon us by Him who died that He might bestow these blessings upon the guilty.

What must be the consequences of such a crime as that of refusing to accept Jesus. So long as we persist in rejecting Him, sin has the mastery. The evil power keeps rapidly weaving its coils around every member of the immortal being. We pass away into the unseen world with such a seared conscience—a petrified heart. With such a passion for sin, that holiness was rejected though offered by the crucified Saviour, and urged upon us by all the eloquence of redeeming love—and as a necessary qualification for the felicity of heaven. What must be the eternal destiny of such a soul, even if God should take no notice of its crime. But He does take notice. He is a just God. He has always threatened transgressors. How will he treat those who refuse to be pardoned, who despise the most sublime expression of love ever revealed since time began, who show that they will not serve, though he be a heavenly Father, and though His divine Son pleads and weeps in tears for them.

Those then who reject Jesus, are more guilty, more enthralled by sin, and exposed to a heavier condemnation than those who never heard of his name. They are placed in the highway to elevate them into a region of purity and felicity.

For the Christian Watchman. NOTES ON CANADA. CONTINUED.

It is when we come to the appearance and character of the people themselves that we find the national traits standing out most prominently. In the same hotel may be found worthy representatives, not only of the great British and American classes, but of various and distinctly marked subdivisions of these classes. At the dining table one scarcely knows which to admire most, the portly, self-important Englishman who discusses at leisure the merits of his beef or his dogs, and edifies the company between courses, with the details of yesterday's, or the plan of the afternoon's sports, or the tall, slender Yankee, from whose plate the substantial disappear by magic, closely followed by the pudging, steaming hot, till his proprietor hurries off to attend to the more important business of driving on some pending bargain. While the imagination of the one soars in its lofty region from perch to perch, and from squirrel to woodcock, he unwittingly stores up a generous supply of strength and animal spirits. The habits of the other shrivel and attenuate the physical man, but stimulate at least one faculty of intellect to an intense acuteness—an acuteness not always propitious to the material interests of those with whom he comes in business contact. Nor should we omit to make honorable mention of the stern Scotchman, who exemplifies his characteristic power of concentration in a contemptuous disregard of the little amenities of table etiquette and a taciturn devotion to the one business in hand. Happily, however, the matter-of-fact impress which he stamps upon the affair quickly fades before the genial countenance of the son of the Emerald Isle, whose occasional sallies of mother wit effectually dispel long faces and shades of gloom.

But we would at the present juncture, or rather disjunction of affairs, commend the curious student of feature and character to the group assembled on the veranda of the principal hotel in some country town, awaiting the coming of the daily mail. We shall not soon forget the scene presented by such an assemblage when the first, exaggerated reports of the affair at Bull's Run arrived. There was the exultant Southerner, too proud to give full vent to the triumph which gleamed in his eye and rushed to his lip. There was the boastful Northerner loudly proclaiming his diabolical, while his boiling heart, his dejected face, and his nervous movement gave the lie to his professions. There were the naturalized Canadian giving unhesitating expression to their divided sympathies, in tones of sorrow or of gladness, and too often, in disgusting vituperation against the newly arrived Britisher, who condescended to listen to the account sometimes as one in a gracious mood deigns to notice the gambols of children at play. This last character we may reasonably hope, is the representative of a class comparatively small. The true British heart cannot but throbb with painful interest in view of the pending struggle, suggestive as it is, of so many phases

of the growth of its own loved Constitution and pregnant with such momentous issues to the cause of liberty, civil and intellectual. Our opportunities for observation of the social and domestic habits of the fair having been rather limited, we gladly refrain from presuming to offer many remarks on so delicate a topic. Without venturing a criticism upon their style of head-dress, or their fastidiousness in their breadth of skirts, we shall make them our best bow with but one passing remark. They not infrequently adhere to the antiquated customs of wearing shoes to their shoes and a natural bloom on their cheeks. The latter fact is patent to the most ordinary observer. The former was arrived at by inference, as being the only explanation of the singular circumstance that their footfalls are often distinctly audible on the stairs or pavement. We do not presume to hint at the possibility of any physiological relation between the two.

Were we disposed to ask still further traces of the foreign elements which have united to give a population to Upper Canada, the best possible opportunity would probably be that afforded by a visit to the various churches in some of its towns on a Sabbath day. This, we judge, will give the truest criterion of the nationalities of every day life soon wear off the edges and obscure the outlines of their habits and opinions which are exposed to their friction. But with a people's religion the case is different. The mode of worship of the father or the father land, is generally observed by the children to the third or fourth generation. Here there is no intermingling of shades, no dissolving views. The orthodoxes cut and dried creeds stand in English cathedrals or Scottish kirks stand out side by side in Canadian churches, with outlines as definite and as unyielding as of yore. During the six days the good nature of the child of Erin and the sharpness of the American re-ent get angry and effectually upon each other, but on the seventh each wraps his native sin in its peculiar cloak and carefully takes the other side of the street to avoid a brushing of skirts. Why this is so is not for us to say. Whether the sad tendency of the age to keep one's religion indoors all the week to preserve its sickly frame from the rude jostling of the worldly crowd, makes it so shy and formal that it cannot be approached on its Sabbath day appearance, or whether there is something in man's religious instinct which makes him oftentimes cling so closely to the form as he should do to the spirit and the truth of his worship it is not for us to determine. It is however true that in Canada as in most other places, though we cannot but think to a greater extent than in most other places, one can generally tell the nationality of the townsman by the place of worship they frequent. He may visit the Episcopal church and trace the ancestral homage of English nobility in the veneration of priestly law and the long ritual and ceremonial kept scrupulously free from the slightest touch of innovation. He may go to the unimaged Scottish congregation and study the nation's character in the long ranks of hard, earnest features, as the people drink eagerly and "inwardly digest," every metaphysical thought, while the preacher takes his stand fearlessly upon the lofty and uncompromising doctrines of divine sovereignty and foreordination. Or he may visit the Wesleyan assembly, where he cannot fail to find in the wisely and well adjusted machinery, in the comfortable arrangements and in plausible and pleasant doctrines of the set, much notwithstanding its origin, to point it out as admirably adapted to be grafted on an American stock and to grow in American soil.

(To be Continued.)

POLAND AND ITS HISTORY.

"Unhappy Poland" begins again to attract the attention of the world, after having passed a period of silence of thirty years' duration. So profound, indeed, had been this silence, that it might well be compared to that of the tomb. But Poland was not dead; she was only sleeping. What is to be the issue of the present struggle, is known only to God. It is to be feared that it will end in riveting more permanently the fetters by which she has been so long bound hand and foot. It may, however, be far otherwise. Something will depend on what England will say and do, and almost infinitely more on what Louis Napoleon will say and do. It is manifest that there has been some great mistake made, or Russia would not have had the occasion and the power to place one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers in cities and towns of the country. Poland of these days, or what is called such in ordinary speech, is the "Duchy of Warsaw," which Bonaparte created in 1807, and which the Congress of Vienna, at his downfall, converted into the "Kingdom of Poland," and placed under the Government of Russia. It was a sad blunder. That central part of old Poland, its very heart as it were—had never belonged to Russia. She had not gotten any part of it by any of the three "Partitions" in which she had shared. Prussia had gotten the most of it, and Austria a part. But Bonaparte took it from those powers, and created out of it the "Duchy of Warsaw," as we have said, and placed it under the protection of the Elector of Saxony, whom that "king-maker" created "King of Saxony" about that time. The Congress of Vienna has given it to Prussia if they had not the sense of justice which would have led them to re-establish the Kingdom of

Poland, with all its proper dimensions. By doing so, they would have made Prussia strong. As it was, they made Russia too powerful and brought her western boundary much too near the centre of Europe.

But the Congress of Vienna had a hard task to perform. England and France stood up for the claims of Prussia to have the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, Austria for the Poles. But unfortunately for Prussia and the Poles, Bonaparte escaped from Elba just at the critical moment when that question was being discussed. Instantly, Russia took a bold stand, and threatened to join France against all the rest of Europe, unless her demand for the Duchy of Warsaw was granted. The Congress, intimidated by the menace, yielded, only stipulating that Russia should give the new "Kingdom of Poland" a constitution—a stipulation which the Emperor Alexander I. agreed to, and which he executed in good faith. Under that constitution Poland flourished from 1815 to 1830, when, in an evil hour, and contrary to the advice of her oldest and wisest men, the students of the University of Warsaw, in September, 1830, imitating the students of the Polytechnic Institute at Paris, in the revolution of the preceding July, attempted to make a revolution in that famous capital of Poland. The citizens joined them, and the movement became general throughout the country. But in little more than a year, the Poles were crushed by the overwhelming forces which Russia poured into that country, many of which had been gotten ready a month earlier for a campaign into France, to put down the revolution that had elevated Louis Napoleon to the throne of the Cæsars.

It is a singular coincidence, that the Russians charged Louis Philippe and his Government with having incited the Poles to make the attempt at revolution in 1830. The very same charge is now made by them against Louis Napoleon and his Government. If Louis Philippe did that thing, and then refused to aid the Poles in the desperate struggle which they made, he certainly deserved the dreadful downfall and disgrace which divine justice meted out to him. Louis Napoleon, if he has been guilty of the same conduct, should profit by the lesson.

The history of no country in Europe is more fraught with instruction than that of Poland; and there is none, we will add, that is so little understood in this country. God is just! This truth is set forth in such letters, in that history that "he that runs may read." Let us look at a few points: The great Slavonic race established three kingdoms, in the early ages of the Christian era—those of Kiev, Novgorod, and Cracow. The two former were united under Ruric, or rather Ruric's son, and became the nucleus and foundation of what is now the Russian Empire. The last named (that of Cracow) became the Kingdom of Poland. The Russians received their Christianity and civilization from Greece and Constantinople; and when the "Grand Schism" took place (which began in the tenth century, and was completed in the twelfth), they took sides, as was natural enough, with the Patriarch of Constantinople. The consequence is that the Russian Church, with its 50,000,000 of followers, is the head of the universal Greek Church, and, indeed, of all the six Oriental Churches. The Poles, on the other hand, received their civilization and Christianity from Italy via Germany, and just as naturally took part with the Bishop of Rome. In other words, they became Roman Catholics.

This simple statement accounts for the early enmity which manifested itself between the Russians and the Poles. It had its source in the hostility which sprang up between the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople. And as the Poles became far superior to the Russians in civilization and arms, owing to their intercourse with Germany and Italy, and their wars with Teutonic knights, they soon were able to carry their victorious standards far into the western side of Russia. Rome, of course, encouraged all this. So extensive were these conquests, that Kiev was for some time in their hands, and they were enabled to found Smolensk, on the Dnieper—a city far in the direction of Moscow, which had become the capital of Russia. And although Ivan the "Great" and Ivan the "Terrible" did much to save Russia from the Tartars on the south and east, as well as the Poles on the west, it is nevertheless a fact, that the Poles were able, during the interregnum of sixteen years (1597-1613) between the last of the Ruric dynasty and the first of that of the Romanoffs, to march to Moscow, and put a creature of their own on the throne of Muscovy, and sustain him there for some time. And in doing this, they were encouraged and aided by the Pope of Rome. It was mainly by these conquests from Russia, that the Kingdom of Poland increased until it extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and had a population of twenty-two millions of people, nearly one-half of whom belonged to the Greek Church. And how did she get so many adherents to the Greek Church? By the conqueror so large a part of Russia. Can we wonder at the intense hatred that all this excited in the breasts of the Russians, priests and people, against the Poles? But matters did not stop here. The Russians at length, advancing in civilization and strength under the Romanoffs, began to retake what the Poles had taken from them. In the reign of Catherine the Great, the "Partitions" of 1772, 98, and 96 took place. Russia got back all she had

lost, and not much more, and Poland was annihilated! What an instance of the retributive justice of God, in his dealings with nations, does this history furnish for the instruction of mankind!

But there is something more to be said: The doctrines of the Great Reformation of the sixteenth century entered Poland from Germany, and a large portion of nobles, and the people in the western part of the Kingdom—the part which was exclusively Roman Catholic—became Protestants, and Protestantism bid fair to become the dominant religion of the country. Nearly or quite half the members of the Diet became Protestants. But in an evil hour, Sigismund (a renegade Swede) was chosen king (for Poland was an elective monarchy during the latter part of its independent national existence), in 1572. That able but bad monarch introduced the Jesuits, and in two centuries the Protestants were so far extirpated, that there are not at this day any thing near half a million of the Poles in all the world, who profess the Protestant faith! In fact, the persecution of the Protestants was one of the causes of the First "Partition." The Protestants of that country desired and invoked the interference of the surrounding countries—a fact which had its influence with Protestant Prussia.

Poland was absorbed by three great powers of different religious faith. Austria, Roman Catholic, got the smallest and best share, and has (the Poles themselves being judges) governed her part, though nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the people of Galicia are Roman Catholics, the worst of all! Russia gained by far the largest, and though herself professing the Greek faith, has done better by the Poles than the Austrians. Whilst Prussia, that now has the poorest part, and the smallest share of the population of Poland, has governed her part the best of all; so much so, that intelligent Poles that are Roman Catholics, have confessed to the writer that if Austria and Russia had governed their portions of Poland as well as Prussia has done, the Polish nation would have little reason to regret the partition of their country.

One of the most infamous things that Rome has ever been guilty of was the "bull" which the Pope issued secretly against the Polish revolution in 1830. M. de Oster, the author of the Revolution in Belgium, spoke of it in his life of Ricci, and Abbe de la Mennais published it in his work called Rome. Gregory XVI. issued a "bull" in 1846 (just before he died), against the attempted revolution in Galicia.

But better days will come. A pure Christianity must take the place in Poland of the superstition and intolerance of the Roman Catholic Church, which has been the cause of the present partition and destruction of so many Protestant confessors in that land. The English and German missionaries did much in Poland to impart the knowledge of the Gospel to the Jews, from 1818 to 1854. We know of nothing to hinder the circulation of the sacred Scriptures among the Poles, the Jews, and the Germans, in what is called Poland—formerly the Grand Duchy of Warsaw—with its population of five millions of souls. We are happy to say that the Baptists of Germany, aided by the Baptist Missionary Society of this country, have commenced a mission in Poland, and also in Lithuania. God grant that they may have great success. Who knows but that this may be the commencement of a great work? The Saviour will yet have Poland as a part of his great "possessions."

A WORD TO YOUNG MEN.—We quote the following from the Rev. Wm. Arnold's new work:—The writer remembers the days when, as the dinner-hour was announced, and all gladly threw their work aside, he satified a fresh appetite during the first few minutes, and stretched himself upon the shade of a tree, occupied the remaining fifty-five minutes reading the wars of Caesar, and the songs of Virgil, in the language of ancient Rome. It made his afternoon's toil lighter. It made his neighbors respect him; and what is more, young men, it made him respect himself. In virtue of that employment the endeavor did not so frequently assail him; and he was supplied with an auxiliary means of defence. There are many branches of useful knowledge, easily accessible from which you may choose; each according to his taste. We earnestly counsel young men to scour up, and keep in use all the powers of understanding and memory which God has given them. It will sweeten your labour. It will be something soter to lean on between your flesh and the iron instruments of toil. How great the privileges of youth in this country, and at the present day. How great is the waste, if the museums, libraries, and public rooms be not turned to good account.

A MINISTER'S SENSE OF OMISSION.—The following appear in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," a Methodist paper. Perhaps portions of all denominations may take some interest of it to themselves:

- 1. My conscience accuses me of the following things: 1. GREAT NEGLIGENCE AS TO SECRET PRAYER.—Little time, little fervency, little intensity, little special prayer for my office or for my flock. 2. GREAT NEGLECT OF THE SCRIPTURES, as to private or ministerial edification; great absence of Scripture proof in my sermons; simply